They Came Alone
The Story of her Relatives
By Rhea Lewis

In the little town of Alston, in Cumberland County, near the Scottish border, lived the Wanlass and Bell families. They were the progenitors of the Wanlass, Hutchings, Sharp, Mayberry, some of the Kirkham and Whipple families, the Giles of Lehi and the Atwood families of Pleasant Grove, Utah.

The family of Jackson Wanlass and Mary Russell consisted of two boys and two girls; William Jackson, Russell, Isabella, and Ann Russell. The other boys died in infancy. They were named William and Ralph. On May 31st, 1826 after only 14 years of marriage, the wife, Mary Russell died leaving Jackson with four small children. He later married Ann White and it was from this union that the Sharpe and Long families came. Jackson Wanlass Sr. and William Bell were both miners by trade and each accumulated a nice collection of minerals. They were honest, hard working, home loving people, and it was in this peaceful environment the children grew to maturity.

When William was twenty-two years of age, he married a beautiful girl by the name of Isabella Bell. They were blessed with four lovely children, but as each little spirit came into the world, it was only privileged to stay a little while, then were called back home. The oldest child, a little boy, lived to be six, then he too followed the rest. The mother stricken with grief, passed away two years later, so William broke up housekeeping and went back to live with his parents. By this time, Jackson had married a lovely girl by the name of Sarah Bell, and they were blessed with two children, a boy and a girl. The boy, who was christened William, after his uncle, passed away at eleven months, and a year later the mother died leaving her husband with the only little girl, Mary, age three, who lived to maturity and became the wife of William Hutchings.

The gospel of Jesus Christ was brought to Alston in 1837 and Jackson Wanlass Sr. and William Bell were the first to be baptized into the LDS church in that vicinity.

Immediately the spirit of gathering to Zion took possession of them and as money was very hard to get each family member pledged themselves to help each

other financially if they decided to come to the new world. Inasmuch as William had lost his family and had only one dependent, his wife, he decided to be the first of his family to try his luck in America, so he left and took up his abode in Richmond, Ray County MO. A year or two after he arrived he helped to finance the trip of his brother Jackson and family. Jackson by this time had married his wife's older sister, Jane Bell and they had been blessed by two children; Jackson, who grew to manhood and married Julia Phillips, and Sarah, who married William Atwood.

This little family, together with Mary, who was now eight years of age, decided to migrate to America and join William. Jackson had been a coal miner in England and he found it extremely difficult to adjust himself to a life on the farm. The ground, that he had been trying to make produce food, looked more favorable for coal to him. He finally gave way to his impulse and started digging into the hillside. He had not dug long until he struck coal. At this time little interest was taken in his find, as wood was plentiful and much cleaner to burn. Also their fireplaces burned the wood more readily, therefore it sold for seven to ten cents a bushel. Mary helped her father by pushing the little homemade car in and out of the mine. In crawling behind the car, the coal skimmed her knees and to her death her knees were black from the fine coal crust under the skin.

Shortly before the twins, Sam and Annie were born, Jackson mounted Old Bobby, the mule and made his usual Saturday trip into town to collect for the coal he had sold and to buy some groceries.

On the way home, he suffered a stroke which paralyzed his left side and his speech. He managed to hang on to the faithful little mule, and the animal finally got him home. The family heard them come, but when the usual call of "Hello" was not heard, they were frightened. The unrest was as bad before the civil war was started as after, and they were afraid it was bushwackers or renegades. Finally the donkey brayed and this gave them courage to open the door. Jackson had fallen from the donkey and was lying on the ground. They dragged him into the house. As he could not speak or move, they knew he had suffered a stroke. It took Mary and her mother months to nurse him back to partial health, but he never was able to work again.

The strain and anxiety of all this proved too much for the mother. She herself took ill and in spite of all the family could do for her, she gradually grew worse. She passed away June 6th, 1862 and was buried in the Richmond cemetery.

While she lay dying, the battle of Lexington, MO was being fought. From their little cabin in the woods they could see the shells bursting and men running. They were so frightened they didn't dare go for help, and they probably couldn't have found it if they had gone.

Now Mary had to assume the role of mother and housekeeper. What an enormous responsibility for a girl of fourteen, twins four years of age, a little sister six, her brother nine, and a bedridden father. However, with all this added responsibility, she never lost sight of the fact that they had left their home and comforts in England to go to Zion, and up 'til now, they had gotten only as far as Missouri. She couldn't forget how her stepmother had pleaded to go on, and even on her death bed she turned to Mary and said: "Don't give your father any peace until he goes to the rocky mountains". So she vowed within herself to take the children to the rockies even if she had to go alone.

She told her father what she intended to do with such earnestness that he believed she meant it. So in spite of the pleadings of Major Sievere, who even offered him half interest in the coal holdings, the father sold all he had for enough money to buy a wagon, a yoke of young steers, and a few provisions. Aunt Ellen Sharp made the children some new clothes and helped them with their arrangements.

Finally when all was in readiness, they bade goodbye to their loved ones and started the journey west. An emigrant train of non-Mormon settlers going to Oregon to escape the ravages of war, had been made up at St. Louis and Jackson made arrangements to go with them as far as Iowa. Here he expected to join a company of saints. Soon after they started, the father suffered another partial stroke of the left side, which made him entirely bedfast and it was necessary for them to drop behind until he was able to travel. They were detained for more than a week and by the time they were able to continue their journey, they were so far behind they never did catch up with anyone so the pressed on alone. The three small children were placed on the backs of the oxen and the nine year old boy acted as co-pilot.

Day after day they trudged through a country overrun by lawless renegades-men who had deserted both armies and were foraging for themselves. They pushed on until the last settlement was left behind, and they reached the Platte river. They should have crossed it, but instead they continued on the west side

which unknowingly isolated them from the whites and led them through hostile country. They saw Indians every day. Sometimes they were talkative and friendly while other times they were sullen and painted with war paint. On several occasions young warriors would rush upon them, shout, and wave blankets at the cattle to stampede them, but the cattle only shook their heads, blinked their eyes and plodded on. Then the Indians would laugh and ride away. Many times the cattle would be driven off in the night, but in the morning they were always found in a nearby wash, or behind a hill. When they made camp at night, the Indians would come from every direction and sit around their fire, or on the wagon tongues. Mary's only fear was that the tongue might break under their weight, then they would be stalled.

The hand of the Lord was manifest in their behalf throughout the whole journey, but more especially so on several occasions. The Indians knew her father was bedfast because they would raise the wagon cover and look in. In poor English they asked if her pappy was sick. When she nodded, they would ride away, only to return later with rabbits or wild ducks for her to cook for him.

Whirlwinds are very common on the plains, and one evening, when they were camped on the banks of the Platte, they encountered an extra strong one. It picked up Annie, one of the twins and dropped her in the middle of the river. The other children screamed, and immediately plunged in, clothes and all and brought her out. How, she did not know, because she knew nothing about swimming and her brother was busy tending the cattle.

Whenever they camped by water, they let the cattle drink as often and as much as they could because sometimes it was a long time between drinks. The little black heifer, that helped pull the wagon each day was the one that supplied the twins with milk, and the only food she got was what she could forage at night. After the twins were fed, the remainder was put into a jar, and at the end of the day it was taken out in the form of butter, thus the rough roads did the churning.

Along the way they gathered buffalo chips for fuel, and put them in a sack which hung from the back of the wagon. If wood was plentiful at the next stop, they saved the chips for the campsite where there wasn't anything to burn. Buffalos were plentiful and several times they saw great herds. One one occasion a herd came directly toward them and as they neared the wagon, they parted going on either side. This made the cattle very nervous and Mary was afraid they would try to get away from the wagon but they soon quieted down and stood while the

herd passed.

Days wore on and so did weeks, with the same anxiety and routine until finally what first appeared as clouds on the western horizon afterward took the form of mountains. Each night they would be a little closer and mountains seemed to get higher until finally by continued plodding, they reached the foothills.

The wagon by this time showed signs of wear and the cattle were poor and tired. The going was harder than ever because of the grade was steep and rocky. Happily, when the summit was reached and they started down the other side, they met the first white man they'd seen since they left Missouri. The man was Fred Trane, from Lehi and he was driving a freight wagon back to Omaha, Nebraska. He told them the name of the canyon they were in was Echo canyon, also that he knew their uncle William Wanlass in Lehi. He also said the quickest way to reach Lehi would be to cut across the pass to the head waters of the Provo river, then follow the river right into the valley.

They did as he suggested and while the road was very poor and scarcely used, they cut several days off their journey. Upon reaching the valley, by still following Mr. Trane's directions, they soon came to Lehi and found their Uncle William's place.

Words cannot express the joy and gratitude at the meeting of these two families, and for the first time in months, they slept without fear of the Indians, or their cattle being stolen in the night.

William's home was located on the corner of first south and first east in Lehi and for a few days they truly enjoyed the well earned rest. Uncle William helped them to build a little dugout on his property and this, together with their wagon, served as living quarters for the first winter.

In the spring they secured a vacant spot on the corner of third east and Main Street and with the help of Uncle William again, they built a larger dugout which was to be their home. It was twelve feet square and six feet deep. They dug down three feet below the ground level and the walls which were made from the mud removed from the excavation extended three feet above the ground. A pole was placed across the top of the walls in the center to hold willows on which was placed mud. A mud fireplace was put in the west end, and in the south was a small window and a door over which they hung blankets to keep out the cold.

The father recovered a little and was able to do a few odd jobs, but he was not able to speak very plainly and it was hard for him to walk. He only lived a

year after his arrival. He died Oct. 31, 1864. He was buried in the Lehi cemetery. At the time the people were buried in rows and the graves leveled so that the Indians wouldn't molest them as a result no one could ever find his grave again.

Lawrence Hill, a cousin to the Hutchings, was sexton at the time the roads were put into the cemetery and when they were clearing the brush and grass away, they uncovered fourteen graves. Of course there were only the bones and part of the boxes left and the indications were that the coffins had been made of wagon boxes and very crude lumber. They were reburied in the southeast corner of the cemetery just even with the sextons tool house. The southern end of the cemetery did not extend to the road then as it does now and it is thought that Jackson Wanlass' body must have been one of the fourteen.

The family were in very poor circumstances at this time and starvation faced them so each child went to live with a friend. Mary married William L. Hutchings. Jackson went to Cottonwood canyon to work in the saw mill for Francis Armstrong, a relative. Sarah also went to Cottonwood also and worked at Dr. Hullingers home for seven years. She later met and married Millen Atwood. Ann Jane who became Mrs. Adrian Mayberry stayed at the home of William Bann and Samuel went to work for some people in Bear Lake.